Finding Your Path

Our Experiences

"I defined my vision for the future using LifeCourse tools to figure out what I want my life to look like. I worked on my future plan throughout high school by completing career and independent living assessments with my support team, including teachers, case managers, occupational therapists, and speech therapists.

My team has been really important in helping me build that vision. My mom has been a big source of support, and I've also worked with a job coach to figure out what kinds of work environments and strategies work best for me. When something isn't working, I try different strategies until I find what does.

Planning for Life after High School

Thinking about adulthood can bring both excitement and uncertainty. No matter what path you take, it's helpful to reflect on what you want your life, support system, and environment to look like.

Questions to ask Yourself

- What does independence look like for you?
- What are you excited about in this next stage of life?
- What makes you nervous?
- What kinds of people, activities, or environments help you do your best?
- What interests or passions do you want to include in your future goals?
- What values matter most to you?
- What supports, services, or transportation do you need where you live, study, or work?

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For example, in college I take one class at a time so my workload stays manageable and I don't get too overwhelmed. After managing my medical conditions, my parents and I also realized I needed support with executive functioning. Through Vocational Rehabilitation, I started working with an executive functioning coach, which has helped a lot."

"I know something is the right fit when I feel happy and successful. I also know I've found the right support person when I feel comfortable, seen as who I am–not just my diagnosis– and able to succeed." - **YEAH Council Member**

Steps for Success!

1. **Create a vision for your future** - Think about the kind of life you want and the goals that matter to you.
2. **Remember that perfection isn't the goal** - Everyone's path is different. It's okay for plans to change.
3. **Build a support network** - Family members, mentors, teachers, doctors, and peers can help guide and support you.
4. **Stay organized and set realistic goals** - Breaking big goals into smaller steps can help you move forward.
5. **Practice self-advocacy** - Speak up about your needs and make sure your voice is part of decisions that affect you.

Choosing the Right Environment

The environment where you live, study, or work can affect your independence and success. Accessibility looks different for everyone. Online information can be helpful, but it doesn't always show the full picture. If possible, visit places in person, ask questions, and think about what will work best for you.

Things to consider:

- Transportation options
- Physical accessibility
- Available supports or accommodations
- Community activities and opportunities